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THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT IN THE PRESENCE OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

TOUR OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
MONTERREY - TAMPICO - GUADALAJARA

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MEXICO CITY
PRESS OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS
1936

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Publication of these reports is designed above all to spread, as swiftly and effectively as may be, in other countries, the truth in regard to certain political and social problems of ours, which due to their magnitude and transcendent importance, interest international opinion. Besides, the same information is being widely diffused within our own country, for ample knowledge of work done by a Government is never superfluous, and because it is desired that the people of Mexico may know how their great problems are presented to the world, and contribute ideas for their more adequate solution.

I

LAST February there was stirred up in the City of Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, an intense agitation between employers and workers that aroused a certain feeling of alarm throughout the country, due to the unusual and partial aspect given to it by reports circulated; these happenings induced the President of the Republic himself to proceed to that city, to become personally acquainted with the situation, and his intervention was so efficacious that it at once settled the serious conflict in process of incubation, and what is still more important, prevented the example set by the employers' class of the capital of Nuevo Leon from spreading to other industrial centers; the position of the Mexican State in the presence of conflicts between capital and labor was, once for all, definitely fixed, said position being none other than that explicitly authorized by our laws.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES

Due to questions inherent in all industrial concerns, a labor conflict broke out in a glass works at Monterrey; as the opposing parties were unable to agree, the conflict culminated in a strike by the workers at the plant in question, the competent Labor Court having taken cognizance of the dispute, and having held that the strike was lawful.

The case in itself was of no particular importance; but it assumed that character when the employers of Monterrey, uniting in support of the business affected, on February 8 decreed

a general shut-down for twenty four hours, and resorted to all kinds of propaganda to make it appear that they were fighting an outbreak of communism, provoked by radical elements that had invaded the capital of Nuevo Leon.

This was the first time that an organized movement of resistance by employers took place, that threatened to spread to the rest of the country, giving rise to agitation fraught with danger for all concerned, inasmuch as it logically tended to embitter the social struggle, which the Government was resolutely bent on guiding into strictly legal channels.

THE PRESIDENT ON THE SCENE OF EVENTS

Setting a brillant example of zeal and activity, the President of the Republic took the unusual step of at once proceeding to the scene of events, and after thorough investigation, and interviews with the opposing elements, and making inquiries of local officials and other persons foreign to the occurrences, but who had witnessed them, he gave out the following statements, which confined the case to its proper proportions:

> "In pursuance of the standards and rules I have set myself for conduct of the affairs of my administration, I deemed it in my duty to come to this City, personally to satisfy myself as to the real position of affairs in Monterrey from a social standpoint, inasmuch as in public demonstrations, seconded by important organs of the Nation's press, the existence was reported of movements aiming at undermining established order as set up by our laws and institutions. After having personally carried out all such investigations as were necessary, and after listening attentively to the arguments advanced by the parties directly interested in the conflict that gave rise to the agitation recently noted, as also to the testimony of authorities and persons representing the organised forces of the community, I have

> reached the conclusion that there is nothing to warrant any belief in the existence of a movement, communistic or of any other kind, aiming at destroying, or even disturbing, the social, political and economic order guaranteed by the General Constitution and the laws of the nation.
>
> "The specific instance that gave rise to recent agitation on the part of employers is a labor conflict of the kind normally occurring in our country.
>
> "A petition presented by a Workers' Union, followed by a strike declared lawful by the President of the Central Board of Arbitration and Conciliation do not constitute events overstepping the bounds set by our institutions. So that the inconformity of employers with a decision of competent authorities, was the cause of the general shut-down that took place on the 5th and 6th instant, and of the agitation worked up under the pretext of defense against subversive doctrines. I now call upon both Employers and Workers, and upon the whole of the Press of this Republic, to lend their assistance to the National Government, so that spirits may calm down and opinion not be misled by attributing to facts entirely normal, to events coming within the natural struggle between social and economic interests, that marks the unfolding of our development, subversive intentions far removed from the consciousness of our people."

PROTECTION FOR ALL

The next day, February 9, a popular demonstration of adhesion to President Cardenas was organized, and as it paraded before him, the Chief of the Executive again specifically stated his ideas, and delivered a discourse, the essential points of which are here transcribed:

"I have spoken to the whole Republic informing it of the line of conduct adopted by organized labor in this city, and also that adopted by the employers, in connection with the agitation that took place here a few days ago.

"It was hardly necessary in my statement of yesterday's date to tell the Nation that in this city the labor element had not insulted the flag of our nation, for the Mexican people, and more particularly the dwellers of this section, well know that both the workers of Monterrey, and the peasants throughout Nuevo Leon are inspired by patriotic feeling as high as that animating any communities anywhere else in the Republic of Mexico.

"That being so, all I wish to say to the organized industrial and rural workers of Nuevo Leon that now listen to me, is that my Government trusts that they will manage to stay perfectly calm, so as to allow the Public Power, and the proletarian organizations themselves, to solve the problems affecting the laboring masses. And I say this, not only in regard to the proper procedure to be followed in this State, but extending my call to all the organized forces composing the people of this Republic, whether the working or employers' classes, as all may rest assured that my Government will at all times see to it that the law is strictly complied with: said law will, however, be enforced in a strictly revolutionary spirit.

"I am certain that industrial and rural workers in the Republic are not indulging in work of political agitation. Their movement is social in character and unfolds inside the bounds set by the law, in order to obtain economic advantages within the capacity of producing enterprises, and the protection of a Government that has ever endeavored to establish social equilibrium on the basis of righteous

relations between capital and labor, which is the only foundation for good understanding.

"It is a fact that workers have in some sections succeeded in obtaining a fair remuneration for their labor, both because permitted by economic conditions of production, and because the zeal of public officials has been duly manifested; but we have not, unfortunately, succeeded in making this betterment general, owing largely to the fact that there are official elements who do not govern their proceedings by correct construction of the Law.

"It is to be regretted that there are still many places where determined attempts are being made to oppose the upward march for betterment of the proletarian classes; it is not only at Monterrey that one may observe this phenomenon, there are other sections of the country where resistance is offered to the performance of our program, in both the agricultural and the industrial fields; I shall mention two cases; the Laguna District and Yucatan.

"There unrest is also being stirred up to lead the Mexican people to believe in the existence of a communistic movement aiming at overthrowing the social order guaranteed by our institutions, when all that labor organizations are working for is enjoyment of conquests by now embodied in our law and legislation.

"It has already been explained to the employers' class and the conservative element that the stand taken by the Government and the proletarian classes is not a phenomenon peculiar to the present administration only. It is consistent with the laws that have bestowed upon our country a new social, political and economic structure, and with the conduct of affairs observed by the administrations that have suceeded one another since the rise to power of the revolutionary régime.

"Past administrations had already proclaimed to the nation the need of bettering social and economic conditions for the working class, for which purpose it becomes, among other Government measures, essential to amend the Labor Law, a project specifically provided for in the Six Year Plan.

"I must, for my own part, remind you that on my campaign tour through the Republic, when a candidate, and in response to the aspirations of the people, I announced that on being raised to power, I would carry into practice the planks of our platform in the contest, and would further carefully select the men called upon to fill public office, so as to meet the needs of the community.

"The Nation can, therefore, see that what is now being done is neither a novelty, nor improvised, and far less a policy deviating from the paths marked by our institutions."

UNIFICATION OF WORKERS

On the 11th February the President called a meeting of the representatives of the various labor organizations involved in the conflict and once more set forth to them the need of working for unity, in order to avoid inter-union disputes, these constituting the most regrettable side of the contest, to the direct injury of the workers themselves.

"After the labor delegates had, with singular clearness and frankness, set forth the points on which they differed, President Cardenas ended the interview by informing the assembly that the Government was working untiringly to bring about labor unity. And in pursuance of this policy, said the Chief of the Executive, I have afforded identical facilities to all central labor unions, without discrimination or preference."

"When I was Governor of Michoacan, later on in the Party, and in the Department of the Interior, and now in the Presidency," added General Cardenas, "I realized the great evils caused by inter-union disputes. In nineteen hundred and twenty-six, for example, the Government gave all its assistance to the CROM alone, and in nineteen hundred and twenty-eight an attempt was made to do something similar in behalf of a particular organization."

"This, instead of establishing unity, only gave rise, among the other labor organizations, to distrust of the rectitude and impartiality of the Government. This is why, after similar experience, I made it known, from the outset of my assumption of office, that I would never assist any given union governing board to help it to control other organizations, but shall devote all my efforts to promoting complete unity of all industrial workers."

"Passing to other topics, the President reminded those present that the working classes know that they cannot appropriate factories and other instruments of work, because they are not, for the time being, either technically fitted for management, or in possession of the financial resources needed for success of an undertaking of such magnitude. Aside from this, there is no reason why alarm should, even among employers, be caused by the existence of advanced social organizations."

"To sum up, the President ratified his labor policy by pointing out the fact that "there is in the country a constitution supplemented by the machinery of law to govern public destinies, and a program of principles and action, which is that guiding the Government's conduct of affairs. Inter-union disputes must come to an end and no weight must be ascribed to personal office. What is important is that the social struggle inherent in

the economic régime under which the life of Mexico unfolds, shall develop with calmness, with loftiness of aim and within the bounds set by the Law."

THE PRESIDENT'S FOURTEEN POINTS

Despite the fact that the President, throughout his statements and discourses, expressed ideas transcendentally important, it was not until the 11th that he specifically stated the Government's labor program, as follows:

"1. Need of cooperation between the Government and factors controlling production; so as permanently to solve all problems inherent in relations between employers and workers under our economic and legal system.

"2. Desirability, from a national point of view, of establishing a Single Central Industrial Workers' Union, to put an end to inter-union conflicts equally harmful to workers, employers and the Government itself.

"3. The Government is the arbiter and regulator of social existence.

"4. Assurances that worker's demands will always be taken into account, within the margin afforded by the economic possibilities of employers and companies.

"5. Confirmation of intention previously communicated to workers' representatives, of not assisting any proletarian organization in preference to any other, but the movement of the workers as a whole, as represented by the Central Unit.

"6. Absolute refusal to the employer's class, of any power to interfere in any way in labor organizations, for employers have no right whatever to encroach upon the field of proletarian social action.

"7. The employers' class has the same right as the workers to link up its organizations within the national structure.

"8. The Government is interested, not in exhausting the nation's industries, but in promoting their growth, for the Administration relies on the proceeds from taxes for its support.

"9. The cause of social unrest must not be sought in the existence of communistic groups. They only constitute minorities without influence on the country's destinies. Unrest arises out of the existence of rightful aspirations and needs of the working masses, as yet unsatisfied, and out of non-compliance with labor laws—this is what leads to unrest.

"10. The occurrence of small communistic nuclei is not a new phenomenon, nor one peculiar to our country. Such small minorities are to be found in Europe, in the United States and in general all over the world. Their action in Mexico does not endanger the stability of our institutions, nor does it alarm the Government, nor should it alarm employers.

"11. Fanatics who murder school-teachers, or who oppose enforcement of the laws and of the revolutionary program, have done more harm to the Nation than the communists, and yet we have to tolerate them.

12. The recent situation created by employers was not confined to Monterrey, but had branched

out to other big centers of the Republic, such as the Torreon District, Leon, the Federal District, Puebla and Yucatan.

"13. The employers' class must take great care that the agitation stirred up by them shall not become a political banner, for this would lead us to a struggle by force of arms.

"14. Any employers feeling weary of the social struggle may turn their industries over to the workers or to the Government; this action would be patriotic, not so a lock-out."

THE CONFLICT AT AN END

After the clear and conclusive statements by the President of the Republic the Monterrey conflict was, on February 12th, practically looked upon as at an end, the strike at the glass factory, which had marked the breaking out of agitation, having been reduced to its right and proper proportions.

II

SOLUTION OF VILLAGE COMMON LAND PROBLEMS

THE President of the Republic took advantage of his trip to northern Mexico, to visit other labor centers, in order to take cognizance of a number of minor conflicts that had arisen some time previously in the border regions of the State of Tamaulipas. With this end in view he proceeded to Ciudad Anahuac, in the State of Nuevo Leon, where peasants were applying for *ejidos*, or village common lands. In this section, comprising the area irrigated by Nº 4 System, popularly known as "Don Martin," are great cotton plantations and wheat fields yielding crops worth several million pesos every year. The lack of lands for the peasant communities of Ciudad Anahuac, Camaron and Rodriguez, composed mainly of repatriated Mexicans, gave rise to the conflict.

The lands made tillable by irrigation works were disposed of under contracts of sale on long-term payments. A number of the settlers, availing themselves, to some extent, of the circumstances obtaining at the time when work was started on Irrigation System Nº 4 and partly by manoeuvers somewhat outside the strict pale of the law, succeeded in monopolizing a number of lots thus evading government provisions prohibiting holdings from exceeding twenty-five hectares (sixty-two acres or so.) The dispute was aggravated by low wages, and the need of an independent economic basis led the peasants to constitute a defensive association.

The Chief Magistrate at once tackled the problem, and insisted on ascertaining the exact number of persons entitled to *ejidos* at

Camaron and Rodriguez, after which he ordered about 3,000 hectares (7,500 acres) of irrigated land suitable for development, to be distributed among the numerous applicants, at the rate of 25 hectares per family. The remainder of the population not granted ejidos will be transferred to the Matamoros and Mante sections, where there are lands sufficient to satisfy the settlers' needs. Lands will be assigned by lot among the citizens included in the Camaron and Rodriguez censuses.

Orders were further given for immediate attention to the problem of education, at both Camaron and Rodriguez, for which purpose supernumerary school-teachers to take care of the population of school age, will be sent in due course.

IRRIGATION OF 56,000 HECTARES (140,000 ACRES) OF LAND

The President of the Republic, on his trip to the Tamaulipas international boundary line confirmed his promise to the country folk of Ciudad Camargo, Tamaulipas, of carrying out great irrigation works at a total cost of 26 million pesos to irrigate 140,000 acres of arable lands. In this connection the Chief Magistrate handed the City Council a memorandum stating:

> "I have to day visited this town and confirmed to the citizens the instructions given by the Federal Government to the National Irrigation Commission, to undertake this year the construction of a dam on the San Juan River to irrigate lands in the municipalities of Camargo and Reynosa."

February 16, 1936.

Lazaro Cardenas,
President of the Republic.

General Cardenas inspected the site selected by the Committee of Engineers for construction of a dam for storage of the waters of the San Juan River.

THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT ATTACK ANY ONE'S RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

On his way through Ciudad Guerrero, Tamaulipas, President Cardenas delivered an important address before a great majority of the citizens of that town who had come to meet him, and stated that the purpose of his tour was to become personally acquainted with the needs of the villages of that section, by investigating their problems so as to solve them within the economic powers of the Government; that he was keenly desirous that men should look upon him as the servant of the people, and that he had gone there to perform his mission by means of direct observation and study on the spot, to enable him to find the correct solution for the problems affecting the community, whether of a municipal character or falling within the jurisdiction of the State or Federal Government; that it would be easy to smooth down the former with the good will of the local authorities, and that others could be submitted to the State Government, while as regards matters within the competency of the Federal Government, he could settle them there and then by means of appropriate orders to the Government organs accompanying him on his tour.

The Chief Magistrate took advantage of the opportunity to state that it was neither the task of the Government, nor its intention, to assail the beliefs or the tenets of any religion. That it had been said that socialistic education opposed religion and tore children away from the love of their parents. He stated that this was nothing but a falsehood, that socialistic education attacked fanaticism by fitting children for better understanding of their duties to the community and prepared them for the social struggle in which they were called upon to take part when old enough to participate actively in economic production, That in the least educated centers a campaign was being conducted against socialistic education by saying that it attacked religion; but that such propaganda was only inspired by political aims. To attack fanaticism did not mean that the people's beliefs would be attacked, nor the tenets of any faith, but only the destruction of prejudices that kept youth sunk in ignorance and prevented the progress and prosperity of the country. The President asked the

people to lend their whole-hearted support to school-teachers, both in their educational activities and in the social work falling te their share. It was a falsehood that religion was persecuted in Mexico. All that the Government required was compliance with the laws on the subject. General Cardenas specially stressed the fact that the basic points of the revolutionary program were of an economic, social and educational character and ended by asking for cheers for the workers in the cause of education.

LANDS TO BE CLEARED AT GOVERNMENT EXPENSE

At Matamoros, where General Cardenas arrived on the 18th, he insisted on knowing how far right was on the side of owners of small holdings of land who complained that groups of applicants for *ejidos* had trespassed upon their lands, and when the President learned that the greater part of these lands were of communal origin, and had been held by right of peaceful possession for a number of years, in some cases exceeding twenty, he decided that the possessors be considered as small proprietors with the rights and limitations provided by the agrarian laws, so that the area untouchable should not be that allowed a village commoner, but that respected in the case of any small proprietor. That being so, and in order to satisfy the needs of applicants for lands, he ordered that any areas needed be cleared and grubbed at Government expense, by utilizing the applicants themselves on salaries for the account of the Government, so that those bodies of citizens should have something to live upon until such time as the necessary lands could be granted them.

The First Magistrate stated that he had adopted the above decisión, though not legally compelled to do so, inasmuch as the law confined itself to providing that the agrarian authorities shall deliver a given area of land to any villages applying for same; but that he had taken this step, just as he had, at Nº 4 System, decided to turn over 3,000 hectares to peasants, villagers and union workers, out of Government cleared and irrigated lands, to restore peace and quiet to that section, in accordance with justice.

"This fact and this step," said the President, "are something extraordinary and must not be looked upon as setting a precedent." He ended by urging those who had forcibly invaded lands to vacate them, thus finally solving this conflict in question.

IRRIGATION OF THE "LA SAUTEÑA" TRACT

On February 19th, while at Matamoros, State of Tamaulipas, the Chief Magistrate ordered that a thorough study be made of the soil capabilities of the wide Sauteña Valley, and of its irrigation possibilities, for distribution of the lands as homesteads for Mexican citizens now dwelling in the south of the United States. The President further ordered that locations be chosen for 200 houses to accommodate the first Mexican families desiring to return. One essential condition of this new community is that it shall be situated on the railroad between Monterrey and Matamoros. The cost of these buildings will come out of the million pesos appropriated for this and similar purposes when allocating the surplus for 1936.

MEETING AT MATAMOROS

In order to become thoroughly acquainted with the latent problems of the Port of Matamoros, the President, on the 18th inst., attended a meeting in the Reforma Theater at which the people, through the representatives of the labor organizations of that section, submitted a number of petitions specifying the urgent problems of the district.

Before hearing said petitions and other popular demands the Chief Magistrate instructed several of his collaborators to address the meeting, to explain the policy of the Government in regard to the offices appertaining to it.

In this connection the Under-Secretary of the Interior took the floor and stated that the Chief of the Executive had both in the big cities and in the small towns, been solving all problems and needs laid before him, and that it was desirable that communities should respond properly to the honesty and uprightness

with which the President of the Republic approached the masses of the people, to ascertain whether injustice were being committed and to apply an immediate remedy. The President, fully conscious of his responsibility, requested the cooperation of all Mexicans for the spread of education, to enable peasants to obtain the lands they need, that workers may attain full enjoyment of their rights and that every Mexican may in his own land count on full protection in every way.

The Chief of the Agrarian Department then took the floor, and began by reviewing the history of *ejidos* or village common lands, and pointed out their economic and social functions from the days when the hosts of Cortes took their lands away from the aboriginal races to hand them over in fee to the conquistadors, who thus built up a "Feudal Mexico" when those lands would, had they remained in the hands of their lawful owners, have served to build up a "Working Mexico," so that the agrarian process, in order to reinstate the lawful owners in possession of their lands, first of all had need of our movement for independence, after that the war of Reform, later on the Revolution of 1910 and lastly the Constitutionalist movement, which brought as its contribution the Law of January 6, 1915, while lawfulness of agrarian conquests had been amply endorsed by article 27 of the Constitution. When lands were distributed in accordance with the laws enacted by the Revolution converted into Government, it was not to satisfy petty ambitions, but to constitute homogeneous and brotherly groups, working in organized fashion for a Mexico that shall be better. After that the Chief of the Agrarian Department went on to explain, with full particulars, the areas fixed for small holdings by the Agrarian Code, and the state of the proceedings in regard to lands in the State of Tamaulipas, and made it clear that the Revolutionary Government, in a liberal, broad and human spirit, did not exact that holders comply with the requirements of the Agrarian Code for legal preservation of their holdings with respect to the Public Register of Property, but incorporated those elements, brothers by class, into the benefits of the Revolutión, recognized their property rights, furnished them every assistance and financed them for development of the tracts farmed by them.

"The Government of the Revolution has," he continued, "come to this section to relieve the injuries caused by sundry inundations and other calamities, and in its keen desire to prove its noble intentions by deeds, has, through the Ministry of Communications and Public Works, built a sea wall for defense of the banks of the Rio Grande, thus transforming impending death and destruction into real hope of fertile soil, free from flood menace, to ensure for rural workers a smiling future. Patriotism lies not on the border, but in meeting Mexico's needs, when these have had to be sacrificed to constitute Mexican nationality.

"The *ejido* as an institution," said the Chief of the Agrarian Department, when he touched on this topic, "is peculiar to Mexico alone, and is not based on any theory imported from abroad, because it has been inspired by Mexico's own pain and needs, and so its laws and legal aspects are unique in the world. The men who compose the *ejido*, so soon as they form part of this institution, become aware of the fact that they have rights and obligations, and whenever necessary, they raise their voice, challenging powerful interests and big capital, to assert their rights as Mexican citizens."

The speaker then proceeded to analyze the controlling factors for success of the *ejido;* he pointed out the benefits bestowed on then by General Cardenas' administration, in turning over annually for the next ten years to the National Bank of Village Common Land Credits, the sum of twenty million pesos to finance *ejidos*, and ended by referring to the President's agrarian work in these words: "Lazaro Cardenas has many problems before him in his administration, but he is very specially concerned with the problems of the peasant class; for this reason, when he gives orders that decisions for grants of lands be executed in the shortest time possible, he does nothing more than respond to the clamor that goes up from Mexico, and promotes the *ejido*, which is no longer merely a tract of land, but an institution worthy of respect, and at the same time the strongest cell and organ of the Mexican Revolution."

Thereupon the Manager of the Village Common Land Bank explained at length the functions of this institution, and reported

that sixteen villages in the Matamoros, Camargo and Reynosa section had been financed, sums amounting to $364,000.00 pesos having so far been delivered to a number of different common land cultivators.

The Chief of the Department of Public Health took the floor in order to point out the necessity of improving public services, and offered the collaboration of his Department for the purpose. He stated that a hospital would be opened at Reynosa and that estimates and surveys would be made for water supply for the villages of Guerrero, Mier and Reynosa, and ended by urging rural and industrial workers to cooperate most actively in the fight against alcohol, to reduce infant mortality.

After that the Under-Secretary of the Interior asked the organizations assembled at the Reforma Theater to set forth, through delegates, their problems, demands and petitions, to be studied and decided in accordance with justice at an early date, he having promised that no school-teacher would be discharged nor any school closed.

A TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY MILE AUTOMOBILE TRIP

The Chief Magistrate did not stop short at ordering that surveys be made of the Sauteña Valley, but he himself took an automobile trip through it and on this long journey he heard the complaints and petitions of small communities, mostly in the State of Tamaulipas, scattered over enormous plains, at times fifty or sixty miles from their nearest neighbor, and utterly lacking in means of communication. And during the sixteen hours it took the President to traverse the great Sauteña Valley, which he crossed from Matamoros to Ciudad Victoria, in the company of his collaborators and of the Governor of the State, he was enabled to form an opinion in regard to the urgent needs of the section calling for relief.

THE PROBLEMS OF TAMPICO

The President duly arrived at the capital of the State of Tamaulipas, and later resumed his journey to the port of Tampico, where he arrived on Sunday the 23d, and after visiting the harbor works, proceeded to the near-by town of Villa Cuauhtemoc, where General Cardenas, as at all points on his tour, listened to petitions laid before him, and became familiar with the local problems not only of Villa Cuauhtemoc, but of the whole district, and explained to the local residents that he was accompanied on his trip by several of his collaborators to take notes of their troubles, to become acquainted with their needs and to seek a solution for every one of them, he and they being well aware of the urgent necessity of relieving the minds of the people of the country by prompt decisions, without overlooking matters of lesser importance.

One of the chief problems of the City of Tampico was the fact that two city councils were functioning, one chosen by election and the other recently appointed by a decree declaring the City Council non-existent. The President solved the conflict by advising that a Board of Civil Administration be appointed to run municipal affairs until the next two-yearly elections. A similar problem at Ciudad Madero was solved in the same way.

The President approved a number of material improvements, such as extension of water supply, by modifying the distribution system and installing meters; reduction of the area of Lake Carpintero, by dredging out the central portion and raising the level of the banks for gardens, filling in swampy spots and stopping the breeding of mosquitoes; rebuilding of the hospital partly destroyed by the 1933 cyclones, and the erection of big freight houses at the railroad yards.

III

THE GOVERNMENT'S SOCIAL THESIS

THE President left Tampico on the 26th for San Luis Potosi. At Ebano Station the Chief Magistrate listened to the oil workers of Section Nº 3, who set forth full particulars of the conflict pending with their employers, due to refusal to entertain their application for a strike, called against the company that had refused to accede to their lawful demands.

The President answered the workers, who had then been on strike for twenty-nine days, and delivered an important address asserting the thesis in social questions of the Government of the Republic, as bearing on the country's economic future and the proletariat's fight for betterment. To summarise, the First Magistrate in his discourse touched upon the following points:

1. The workers' petitions did not exceed the economic possibilities of the company, which in this particular case was the Huasteca Petroleum Company.

2. The Chief Magistrate did not deem the demands of the proletariat composing Section Nº 3 of the Union of Oil Workers, impossible to fulfill; this assertion was based on study of their petition and of the situation of the industry affected by the strike of the Ebano workers.

3. The Executive will hasten settlement of the conflict, through the intermediary of the Labor authorities, inasmuch as delay was harmful to the workers, the company and even the Government.

4. President Cardenas praised the community of interest shown by the workers, in support of their demands for economic betterment, inasmuch as to reach a higher standard of living, and juster distribution of wealth, the protection of the laws or the good will of the authorities were not sufficient, firm unity of workers being essential.

5. The Government was interested in seeing that balance between capital and labor be not disturbed, and therefore insisted that said balance be supported on a fair basis and in accordance with an equitable standard of judging to govern relations between workers and employers.

6. General Cardenas congratulated the school-teachers of that section on the interest shown by them in vital matters affecting the class of rural and industrial workers and assured them—the school-teachers—that the Government would carry out its undertaking to gradually increase appropriations for education, so that by the end of the present presidential term, this item of expenditure would be the biggest in the Budget.

Certain problems of a political nature led the President to alter the plans for his tour, and on arrival at San Luis Potosi he decided to cut it short and returned to the capital to attend to matters urgently needing his presence.

On the 27th, while on route to Mexico, and just as the President's tour through the states of Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas and San Luis Potosi was drawing to a close, General Cardenas granted journalists an interview summing up along general lines the problems dealt with by the Nation's Chief; a summary constituting a complete, specific and clear statement of the policy guiding the Chief Magistrate's conduct of affairs with respect to questions most interesting national opinion at the present juncture.

In his talk, General Cardenas did not confine himself to the matters that took him to the northern section of the country, but also, in reply to questions asked by his interviewers, announced his opinions and the intentions of his Government in regard to matters of capital importance that had arisen in the metropolis.

The first question dealt with was the situation, from a social standpoint, of Monterrey, the cause of General Cardena's journey to the capital of Nuevo Leon, and from which consequences had continued to flow, due to the resistence made by vested interests to the policy of the Chief of the Executive.

"Our journey to Monterrey and the thorough study made by me of the social and economic conditions there prevailing—said the President—have furnished me with sufficient material for full knowledge of the true state of affairs existing in that section; a situation that will not deviate from the normal, provided only that factors contributing to production shall adjust their conduct to the standards set by our laws.

"During my stay at Monterrey, I was careful to point out to labor organizations and to employers as well, the scope of their powers, their duties and their obligations.

"If both factors refrain from overstepping the margin allowable for the defense of their interests,

and submit any differences that may naturally arise to the judgment of the competent authorities, no danger will menace the productive activities of that industrial zone.

"In any case, and due to the very fact of first-hand knowledge of social and economic realities obtaining at Monterrey, the Government is in a position to cope with any emergency, and I can assure you that no activities will be suspended, due to use by the state of its own resources, within the powers granted to it by the laws."

The Chief Magistrate next expressed his satisfaction at the enthusiasm with which the citizens of the border section were getting ready to co-operate in the great works about to be carried out under the direction of the Federal Government, for utilization on a large scale of natural wealth that had for centuries remained latent.

"The works about to be undertaken," said General Cardenas, "like those already in process of construction, form part of a general plan, the aim of which is utilization of the waters to which the Mexican Nation is entitled from the current of the Rio Grande, as also from its affluents and other streams, which are capable of reclaiming enormous tracts of arable land that are now nothing but deserts, or at the outside furnish a precarious living to scanty settlers, who have been compelled to struggle along without assistance throughout the course of our history. These works must, in order to benefit the community, be undertaken by the Government, and this it is now doing. By means of them we shall be able to relieve congestion in other sections, where our peasants cannot now be taken care of; and besides this, we shall open out prospects of incalculable magnitude for development of the national

economy. Side by side with all this, and on occasion prior to execution of irrigation works, we shall deal integrally with such things as health, education and sanitation, and any others that communities now existing may need, so that improvement of conditions may in their case take place immediately, and we shall, further, reserve for them preferential rights to utilization of tracts of land, in order to avoid cases of injustice in the allotment of holdings."

The President then proceeded to touch upon the question of the activities of the groups popularly known by the name of "golden shirts."

"I have fully ascertained," said the President," that the activities of these groups are solely directed at spreading dissensions among the workers and creating obstacles in the way of development of the social program of the revolution. There is no reason for a nationalistic compaign in a country like Mexixo, where all of us, as citizens, know how to fulfill our duty to the nation. Labor organization—against which the punishable acts of the groups to which you refer are chiefly directed—are fully cognizant of their obligations and do honor to their patriotic sentiments by strengthening their agencies for the economic struggle, for in it is involved betterment of the lot of the majorities who inhabit our territory. In any case, it is the work of the Government, in co-ordinating the common effort, creating new sources of production and establishing terms of justice in the distribution of wealth, that will with a better right, safeguard nationalistic sentiment, a noble aspiration for the greatness and prosperity of our Fatherland.

"For this reason, that is nothing to justify the existence of those bands of men known as "the

golden shirts" nor of any other associations that may attempt to replace them, in order to shield notoriously anti-revolutionary work. That being so, I have now communicated with administrative authorities throughout the country, instructing them to prevent, within the scope of their powers, the subversive labor of the persons in question."

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF PEASANT UNITY IS A MATTER FOR THE GOVERNMENT

The last topic touched upon was the inquiry made of General Cardenas in regard to the conclusions reached by the Congress from which arose the Confederation of Mexican Workers, and the intention attributed to it of calling a Congress for peasant Unity, in opposition to and concurrently with work in the same sense being done by the National Revolutionary Party.

"In regard to this, the President first stated that he approved the holding of the workers' Congress, and looked upon it as the initial step resolutely taken towards totalitarian organization of the industrial proletariat. However, added General Cardenas, the Confederation of Mexican Workers must refrain from calling a Peasant Congress. Due to the special situation of the latter, the Government sprung from the Revolution has always looked upon itself and still does so, as obliged to espouse their organization. The National Revolutionary Party, in patronizing the Peasant Assemblies meeting in the various states of the Republic, has only, as the Government Party, obeyed an order made by the Executive under my charge.

"Transformation of the régime of our agricultural production, involving problems such as re-distribution of land, financing of its new possessors and

organization of the latter into collective bodies, in a position to guarantee the nation an ample supply of the staples required for feeding the people and for development of our capacity for agricultural production, that transformation, I say it again, involves direct responsibility for the revolutionary administration; and so, by reason of this responsibility, it is likewise the duty of the Government to see to social organization of the peasants, as and when they are freed by means of appropriate laws.

"Consequently, should the Confederation of Mexican Workers or any other similar organization, in competition with Government Action, attempt to organize rural workers for its own account, far from succeeding in this, it would only incubate the germs of dissolution, by introducing among the peasantry internal conflicts, which have given such fatal results in the case of the industrial proletariat."

IV

LASTLY, in connection with the eleventh Congress for Peasant Unity, held in the City of Guadalajara, the President of the Republic delivered the following discourse:

"Before I today withdraw from this assembly, though I shall come again tomorrow, I wish to state a number of points that will surely vitally interest you; the authorities of the country have been devoting all necessary attention to solution of the land problem. Thus, in 1935, and now in the budget for 1936, appropriations for the Agrarian Department were increased, and the Government, aside from this, is fulfilling its commitment to place twenty million pesos yearly at the disposal of the National Bank of Village Common Land Credits, and this year the amounts for the few months that had elapsed, have already been contributed.

"Nevertheless, in spite of the interest felt by the Government in the solution of the agrarian problem, it is of such great magnitude that it has not so far been possible to devote to it the amounts required by this important branch. But we are in a position to increase, even though on a modest scale, the appropiations for the Agrarian Department, in order to push land grants, more especially in the state of Jalisco. (Applause.)

"I say the state of Jalisco, in preference to others, because that is where the condition of the peasant class most requires it.

A BRIGADE OF ENGINEERS FOR JALISCO

"Unfortunately for you, you have for a long time been in a deplorable position due to the irresponsible attacks of which you have been the victims on the part of some of the members of your own class, who egged on thereto by land owners, have not stopped at slaughtering workers in the fields. This attitude of unceasing aggression against the peasant masses of that state, induces the Government to devote preferential attention to the agrarian needs of Jalisco. And this is why, out of the surplus already left over from January of the present year, we are going to set aside more money to enable the Agrarian Department, without loss of time, and during the month of March, to send to this section a brigade of engineers, to the number of about fifty, who will take over the work of pushing surveys necessary for distribution of lands. The help of this staff will enable us to attend to the various petitions you have been making at this meeting."

SAFEGUARDS FOR THE LIVES OF THE PEASANTS

"It is also our duty to safeguard the lives of the peasants. This is why, today, after the political institute of the revolution, as represented by Licenciado Emilio Portes Gil, has succeeded in obtaining unity of the agrarian element, the Federal Government is in a position to perform the obligation contracted with the workers of the fields at Tres Palos,

Guerrero, when I went on my tour through that state. And we shall, along the lines then laid down, place in the hands of the peasants the equipment necessary to enable you to defend yourselves against any attacks made on you. (Hearty applause, shouts, this is what we need more than anything, Mr. President; give us arms!) The officer in command of Military Operations is now being instructed to organize forthwith all those rural workers who may be in an awkward position on who may personally be threatened by the men being organized in the darkness by our enemies. The military authorities will obey this order, and the Government under my charge fully hopes that cooperation by you will be both enthusiastic and orderly, not only to defend your own lives, but also to do honor to that trust which the Federal Government deposits in your hands. (Hearty applause.) We wish you to respond to that confidence, by constituting yourselves the guardians of public order in the sections where you dwell; that you may be the auxiliaries of our army and the loyal defenders of the institutions by which we are governed, which you yourselves proclaimed on the field of battle.

NO POLITICAL AIM INVOLVED BY UNITY

"Here I deem it timely to repeat that organization of workers, like organization of peasants, is indispensable for enforcement of the laws of this country. As I said on another and previous occasion, the good will of public officials and the mandates contained in the legislation by which we are governed, are not sufficient. A superior force, which can be none other than organized labor, must of necessity

co-operate in order to overcome the resistance that unfortunately opposes economic betterment of our people.

HIS MISSION WILL COME TO AN END IN 1940

"This is the reason that impels us to hasten your organization. And in this there is no political aim involved. Neither licenciado Emilio Portes Gil nor the speaker, needs in any way to unify workers for personal ends. Both he and I are fulfilling our mission, which mission has an end in sight: the year 1940, when our present constitutional term expires. At the end of this terms we shall, like plain citizens, withdraw to our own homes, satisfied, or otherwise, at the fulfilment of our mission.

"All that we ask it that you make it easier for the Government to perform its obligations, so that peasants, once organized, may defend themselves and be in a position successfully to respond to the credits allowed them for their work and stimulate production from the soil, for those credits come from the efforts of the whole nation.

"So that when murmurings reach our ears, accusing us of attempting to organize the peasant class for political purposes, we say that those who make this charge are actuated by sinister motives.

"But the peasant class that has honored us by reposing in us its confidence, must know that we attempt to organize it only the better to serve it. Far from fostering a servile spirit, it is at these popular assemblies, at these courts open to the representatives of the masses, where men may speak with absolute freedom, where you have the right to set forth your problems and your needs, whether the matter involved be of an electoral character, or

of an economic nature or a problem of education or of any other kind. You must know and the whole country must know, that these organizations make for freedom. (Hearty applause.) Liberty within a clear conception of responsibility. You must also remember, that if you have rights, you likewise have obligations, and that these obligations consist fundamentally in the duty of ever acting honestly, in co-operating for improvement of schools everywhere, in making your children go to those schools, in closer relations with school-teachers, in the certainty that the latter are the truest friends of the rural and industrial working classes. (Hearty applause.) You must comply with all these obligations and be the guardians of public peace wherever you may be, and thus will the Federal Executive be in a position to watch over your interests in the performance of its duty.

ATTACKS NO CAUSE FOR WORRY

"Attacks from a number of different quarters against the administration should not annoy nor worry you, nor the Federal Government. There is nothing strange in the fact that we are carrying out the program of our administration when the action behind it is nothing new, nor strange to those now attempting to challenge it. We had unfolded the same work previously in our conduct of affairs in other public offices. In our campaign tour throughout the Republic we announced our program with crystal clearness and the particular way we would perform the items of that same program. So that we have introduced no innovation that might justify the attitude of feigned wonder of those persons. The truth of the matter is that they are now realizing

that the Revolution is not a farce, that our program is a reality, that we are trying to organize rural and industrial workers, because lengthy experience teaches us that it is necessary that workers shall, by their organized force, contribute to make the provisions of our laws an actual fact. (Applause.)

ON A WAR FOOTING WITHIN THE LAW

"This is why we are still on a war footing, although without ever overstepping the bounds set by the law, without affording the opposition an opportunity to say that we are living under a disorderly administration.

"It is true that our proceedings affect certain interests; but this we do strictly within legal ordinances, and because we think as well that the revolution can, now in time of peace, be properly understood even by those men who have habitually remained aloof; but very particularly because we wish that it may be loved and felt by the needy classes, which are the ones benefited by its spirit of justice. (Ovation and cheers for President Cardenas.)

"I greet you in my own name and in that of the persons who accompany me, and say to you that we trust that this unity may be an actual fact; that selfishness or political interest may never make your efforts null and void, and that Jalisco, that has furnished men of outstanding merit to the Revolution, and which has distinguished itself in the fight against retrograde ideas, that Jalisco, for which its workers and its intellectual men have won a preeminent position, may once more show proof of its strength, and above all, of the fact that it is a State suitable for social organization. (Great ovation.)